

K-5



CITY OF LODI COUNCIL COMMUNICATION

AGENDA TITLE: Councilmember Liaison for 2007 City Services Survey via the National Citizen Survey Program

MEETING DATE: February 7, 2007

PREPARED BY: City Manager

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Designate a Council Member Liaison to work with the City Manager to review and make recommendations with regard to the 2007 City Services Survey conducted via the National Citizen Survey Program.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION: Professional city management requires a credible feedback system, one that can help guide the City Council, City Manager, and staff with regard to decisions and allocation of resources. Citizen satisfaction surveys are considered an important indicator of government performance, a key feedback tool.

The National Citizen Survey is a high quality cost-effective method to conduct a citizen satisfaction survey. This program has several unique features. It is a scientifically valid survey, expected margin of error is approximately 5 percent, questions are pre-tested, which allows for comparisons between communities while also providing for policies questions customized for Lodi. It is priced in such a way to make it affordable in order to encourage resurveying in regular intervals. Over 142 localities have participated in the survey program.

The ability to compare results is an important tool to assess performance. Survey data presented without a standard of comparison may lead to wrong conclusions. For example, fire and emergency medical service may be rated very high and building inspection could be rated low. Without a standard of comparison, one might conclude that fire is doing better than building inspection, when in fact, building inspection might have a higher score when compared to other communities.

To maximize the benefits from conducting the survey, it is the Manager's desire to form a Task Force consisting of one Council Member, one member of the Budget and Finance Committee, and various City staff to review the three customized policy questions, evaluate the survey results, and help craft recommendations with regard to actions in response to outcomes. The entire results of the survey will be presented to the City Council.

APPROVED:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Blair King".

Blair King, City Manager

Data collection is expected to occur March 19 through April 16. Survey results are expected to be available at the end of May. Attached is additional information regarding the National Citizen Survey Program.

FISCAL IMPACT: Base cost is \$8,400. Half of the base cost has been advanced to enroll the City in the program. In addition to the base cost, the City can order extra options for an additional charge. For comparison's sake, the City's 2004 survey cost \$25,700.

FUNDING: City Manager's budget.



Blair King, City Manager

Attachments

The Results Are In

Local governments in 30 states have used The National Citizen Survey™ over the past five years to gather information on citizen satisfaction with services. With the ability to compare their local results to norms based on the results of more than 400 surveys administered throughout the country, NCS participants have a priceless tool for effective management. When financial resources are thin, it's a smart investment to spend a few thousand dollars to make sure your priorities match your residents' expectations and help staff improve its performance.

A Service of ICMA and National Research Center, Inc.

The National Citizen Survey™ is a turnkey service provided by ICMA, the premier local government leadership and management organization, and National Research Center, Inc., an independent professional survey firm that "wrote the book" on citizen surveys.

When you sign up for The National Citizen Survey™ you get

- The satisfaction of personal service
- The efficiency of a standardized process
- The benefit of comparability with other jurisdictions.

The National Citizen Survey™ has been designed to complement the work of ICMA's Center for Performance Measurement: your National Citizen Survey™ results serve as an important measure of your jurisdiction's performance.

Find out today how we can help you!

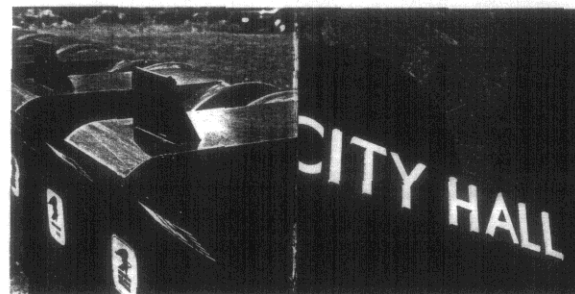
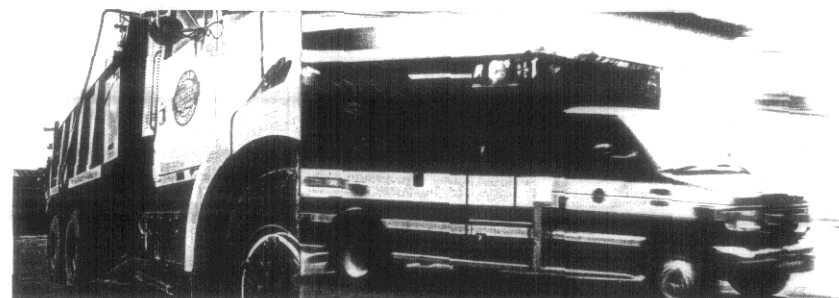
E-mail ncs@icma.org

Web icma.org/ncs

The first and last measure of good government is citizen satisfaction.

- What are your citizens' priorities for spending?
- Are your services to citizens producing results?
- How do citizens feel about new initiatives?
- What service areas are priorities for improvement?

The National Citizen Survey™



Good Government Listens.

The National Citizen Survey™

**Get Data
From Residents
That You Can Act On**

ICMA

Leaders at the Core of Better Communities

07-039

Get the Facts

Do you know how your citizens feel about the pace of growth in your community? Do they feel relatively safe? What's their perception of the overall quality of life in your city? How does the satisfaction level

of your citizens compare with that in other communities across the nation?

With The National Citizen Survey™, you'll be able to answer these and dozens of other questions with the confidence that comes with statistically proven, validated data.

These are data you can rely on to support you with

- Program planning
- Budgeting
- Goal setting
- Priority setting
- Service improvement
- Communications.

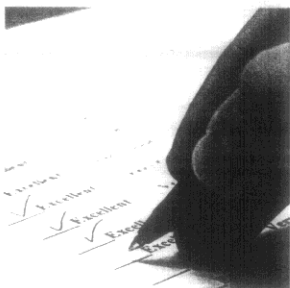
Everyone Wins

Local government staff can use the results to improve service delivery.

Elected officials can use the survey results to set spending priorities.

Chief administrative officers and city, county, and town managers can use The NCS™ year after year to measure progress toward better performance.

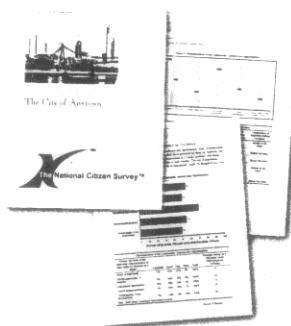
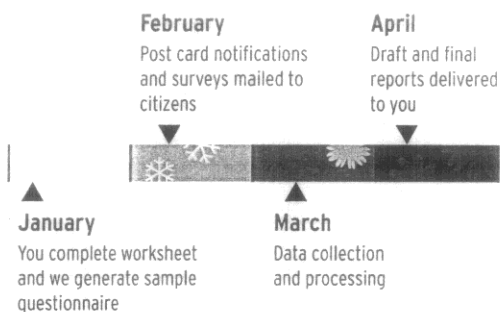
Residents will know you are listening.



Here's How The National Citizen Survey™ Works

The National Citizen Survey™ is a turnkey service at a fraction of the cost of most consultant surveys. Plus, by aggregating results from many local surveys into one database, The National Citizen Survey™ provides you with norms against which to compare your own results.

These norms are derived from an integration of results from over 450 citizen surveys administered to over 300,000 Americans in more than 45 states. Your individual results are never shared with other governments without your permission, but aggregated results create a powerful tool for assessing your services. Here's a sample timeline.



Local governments in 30 states have used The National Citizen Survey™.

E-mail ncs@icma.org for a list of participants and contact information.

The NCS™ Basic Service:

- Customized survey form plus up to three optional questions
- *Citizen Surveys: How to Do Them, How to Use Them, What They Mean*, an ICMA Press bestseller written by Dr. Tom Miller and Michelle Miller Kobayashi
- Customized cover letter
- Three mailings to 1,200 randomly selected households: pre-survey postcard and two mailings of the survey instrument
- A margin of error (95 percent confidence interval) of no more than +/- 5 percentage points around any percent
- Data input and cleaning
- Data weighted to reflect population norms
- Three reports: executive summary, statistical analysis of survey results, optional comparison with national norms, all in electronic format
- Certificate of participation
- Technical assistance by phone and e-mail
- Entry into the annual Voice of the People awards

Options:

- Larger mailings
- Customized norms by region, population, or other factors
- Spanish-language version of survey
- Addition of open-ended question
- Comparisons with results from surveys you've conducted in the past
- Demographic and geographic cross-tabulation
- Phone survey
- Presentation of results to elected officials
- Web survey

Good government listens

The National Citizen Survey™



The National Citizen Survey™

"The value for the cost is really incredible."

What is the National Citizen Survey™?

The National Citizen Survey™ (The NCS™) is a citizen survey service provided by the International City/County Management Association (ICMA) and the National Research Center, Inc. (NRC) that administers, analyzes, and reports results from a semi-customizable citizen survey for local governments.

Why should we survey our citizens?

Citizen satisfaction is an excellent indicator of government performance. The best businesses solicit feedback from their customers; like them, you should be well informed about your citizens' perspectives.

Surveying your citizens will allow you to measure service performance; benchmark service quality ratings; assess community needs; make long-range, short-term or strategic plans; demonstrate the receptivity of your government; and evaluate potential policies or community characteristics.

Additionally, conducting a citizen survey allows you to obtain the opinions of citizens that are not always vocal in the community. Some of these may be generally pleased with services and the general direction of your community and see no reason to state their positive opinions at council meetings and other public forums. There also may be citizens in your community that feel their voices have not been heard, but are reluctant to stand up and state their concerns at a council meeting or other public events. Citizen surveys allow the voices of these citizens to be heard too.

Enroll Today!

To join the next group of local governments conducting The National Citizen Survey™,

- Fax or mail the form on the back to The NCS™, 202-962-3500; ICMA, 777 North Capitol St., NE, Suite 500, Washington, DC 20002-4201
- For more information, e-mail ncs@icma.org.

Surveys begin monthly!

Read about The NCS™ at icma.org/ncs—you'll find prices, schedules, a slide-show presentation about The NCS™, and more!

Why choose The NCS™ over doing the survey on our own or hiring a consultant?

The NCS™ offers many advantages over both in-house administration and the use of a consultant. By conducting several surveys simultaneously, we keep administrative costs to a minimum. As a result, The NCS™ offers an extremely professional service at a fraction of the cost of most consultant surveys. Better yet, by aggregating results from many local surveys into one database, The NCS™ provides you with norms against which to compare your own results. Few (if any) other survey provide comparisons regardless of the cost.

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The first and last measure of good government is citizen perspective

Your results are never shared with other governments without your permission, but aggregated results create a powerful tool for assessing your services.

In addition, The NCS™ would only require 10 to 40 hours of a lead staff person's time from your community over the course of the 18-week administration. In-house design and administration would require far more staff time and effort. Contracting out with consultants also is likely to take a considerable amount of staff time as you develop and edit the survey questions. And you will still leave yourself open to the potential criticism that "you designed the survey to make your community look good." The NCS™ has none of these drawbacks.

An added benefit for communities that also participate in the ICMA Center for Performance Measurement (CPM) is that The NCS™ was designed to complement the work of CPM. Therefore, results of your NCS survey can be used as performance measures for CPM.

What is included in The NCS™ basic service?

The fee for The National Citizen Survey™ basic service is \$8,400. The basic service includes:

- Customized survey form plus up to three optional questions
- Customized cover letter
- Three mailings to 1,200 randomly selected households: pre-survey postcard and two mailings of the survey instrument
- A margin of error (95 percent confidence interval) of no more than +/- 5 percentage points around any percent
- Data input and cleaning

- Data weighted to reflect population norms
- Three reports: executive summary, statistical analysis of survey results, optional comparison with national norms, all in electronic format
- Certificate of participation
- Technical assistance by phone and e-mail

Additional options, including: larger mailings; customized norms by region, population, or other factors; Spanish-language version of the survey; an additional open-ended question; comparisons to results from surveys your community has conducted in the past; demographic and geographic cross-tabulation; phone survey; and presentation of results to elected officials are also available. The fees for these options vary.

What do past participants say about The NCS™?

"The product is very professional and will be a valuable resource for the City as we continue to grow and meet the requirements of our citizens."

"About as painless as it could possibly be for us—they did a super job"

"Staff time is reduced and the built-in efficiencies make The NCS™ very affordable."

"Staff were pleased to get raw data and reports that were well done."

"[Our City] has utilized the National Citizen Survey™ for the past four years and we are currently doing our 5th. We found the survey to be an excellent and cost effective way to find out our citizens are really thinking about the city."

The National Citizen Survey™ Order Form

Yes, my jurisdiction would like to participate in ICMA's National Citizen Survey™:

Please send materials necessary to start the survey process and invoice me for \$4,200 (half the total fee of \$8,400 for The National Citizen Survey™ Basic Service).

I understand that the first step in the survey process will be tailoring the survey instrument and choosing options for survey administration—some of these options may entail additional fees. Once National Research Center has received my payment, The National Citizen Survey™ will begin.

Thank you for your interest in The National Citizen Survey™!

Name	Position		
Organization			
Address	City	State	Zip
E-mail Address	Phone		

Fax or mail this form to: The NCS™, ICMA, 777 North Capitol St., NE, Suite 500, Washington, DC 20002-4201; fax 202-962-3500. For more information, e-mail: ncs@icma.org.